



Cub Scouts line up for color guard.

US NAVY

By ZOLA ROSS-GRAY, age 11



The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) was formed more than 100 years ago as a Christian organization, but the official ban on gay leaders and scouts has only existed since 1991. Their official policy states: “While the BSA does not proactively inquire about the sexual orientation of employees, volunteers or members, we do not grant membership to individuals who are open or avowed homosexuals or who engage in behavior that would become a distraction to the mission of the BSA.”

Zach Wahls, a 21-year-old Ohio State University student, became famous through a YouTube video of his testimony in Iowa against outlawing civil unions\*, in which he defended his two mothers. He then formed Scouts for Equality, a group that supports lifting the BSA ban.

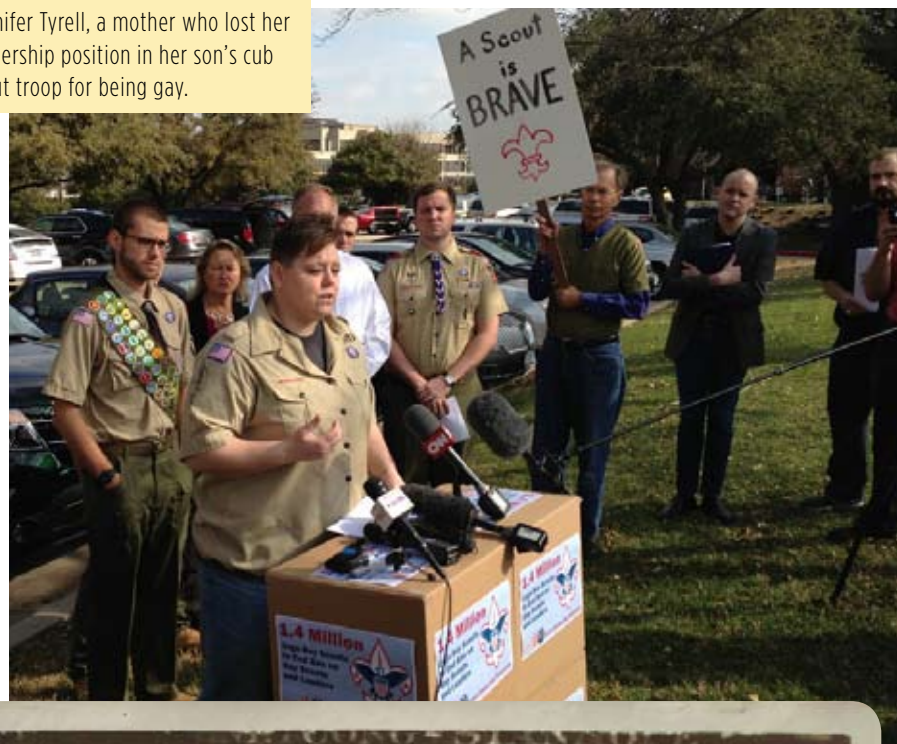
Wahls believes the ban will be lifted because so many BSA members have been outspoken in describing the damage that has been done by discrimination. According to Wahls, “We owe an enormous debt to the advocates and families who put their futures on the line to stand up to the Boy Scout leadership and say, ‘This is wrong.’”

In response to public pressure, on April 19, the BSA proposed to lift the ban on scout members but not leaders. This proposal will now be put to the vote in May, despite the criticism it has drawn from both sides of the issue. Supporters of the ban claim that the BSA is violating their traditional values, while opponents believe that the proposal does not go far enough.

If the BSA representatives vote to remove the ban altogether, they would gain many supporters, but they could lose the backing of many conservative Christian parents and families. If the vote gets rid of the ban, then the BSA will have taken a stand against discrimination.

## SCOUTS SHOUT OUT!

Jennifer Tyrell, a mother who lost her leadership position in her son's cub scout troop for being gay.



GLAAD



A Boy Scout troop from the early 1900s.

\***Civil Union:** a legally recognized union of a couple, same-sex or otherwise, that gives the couple some of the rights of marriage, but not all.





## Meet... **Bobby** from Ireland



**Name:** Bobby James McKinley

**Age:** 9

**Lives In:** County Donegal, Ireland

**Languages Spoken:** English and Irish (Gaelic)

**Parents' Jobs:** Dad is a carpenter and Mum takes care of the kids

**Favorite Foods:** carrots and Walker's crisps (potato chips)

**Favorite Subject in School:** art and drama

**Favorite Activities:** darts and baseball

**How He Would Describe Himself:** a lovely boy, but crazy

**What He Wants to Be When He**

**Grows Up:** an American baseball player



## Ireland at a Glance

**Capital of Ireland:** Dublin

**Population:** 4.7 million (less than New York City alone)

**Languages Spoken:** There are two official languages, English and Irish (also known as Gaelic)

**Religions:** 84% Roman Catholic, 6% Protestant, 8% Non-religious, 2% Other

**Geography:** an island in Northwestern Europe, to the west of England and southeast of Iceland

**History:** Over the centuries, Ireland has survived many invasions by the Vikings and the English. Irish people have suffered religious and cultural oppression and a famine that killed more than a million people. Catholicism is the main religion, but there are also many Protestants, especially in the northern counties. Ireland is a neutral country, which means it does not get involved in war.

By CALUM WOLFE-THOMPSON, age 9

# 685,724

According to the *New York Times*, NYPD officers stopped and frisked people 685,724 times in 2011. Of that number, 87 percent were people of color, and most were Black or Latino.

# nation&world

## Stop-and-Frisk Goes to Court



By SAMUEL MARTINEZ, age 11, and MALIK SHAH, age 9

The New York City Police Department is being criticized for a controversial policy called stop-and-frisk. Stop-and-frisk is when police officers approach people that they find suspicious and pat them down to search for illegal drugs and weapons.

Stop-and-frisk is controversial because it affects certain minority groups unequally. According to the *New York Times*, NYPD officers stopped and frisked people 685,724 times in 2011. Of that number, 87 percent were people of color, and most were Black or Latino.

David Floyd, a Black medical student, is challenging the constitutionality of the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policy by suing the City of New York. He claims the policy violates rights protected by the fourth and 14th amendments to the

U.S. Constitution. These amendments protect people from being searched without permission from a judge and ensure all people are treated equally under the law, no matter their race or ethnicity.

According to Vince Warren, executive director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, which brought the case to federal court, "In over 90 percent of all stop-and-frisks, police officers end up realizing the person they stopped was innocent. This tells us stop-and-frisk is not an efficient way to fight crime."

In recent years, New York City has seen its lowest number of serious crimes in decades. The NYPD says that the declining crime rates mean stop-and-frisk is working, and states that, "Precinct by precinct, the rates at which minorities are stopped are



Young people protesting the NYPD's stop-and-frisk policies in New York City.

consistent with the rates at which minorities are identified as crime suspects."

Floyd claims that minorities are being unfairly targeted under the policy because most of the people stopped are Black or Latino, who only make up 52 percent of New York City's population. "Blacks, Latinos, whites, Asians, we all have equal protection under the law," says Warren. "The Center for Constitutional Rights is making sure the NYPD abides by this basic principle."

## Pink Smoke vs. White Outside of the Vatican



By ALEJANDRA PAULINO, age 11

On March 13, 2013 in Rome, Italy, as the new pope was chosen, a group of women shot off pink smoke to protest the fact that only men can officially become priests and the Pope. They did this to contrast the white smoke that the Vatican releases when a new pope is chosen.

The protesters were from the Women's Ordination Conference, a group that fights for women's rights within the Catholic church. "The huge decision as to who will lead the world's Catholics is being made among men alone," said Janice Sevre-Duszynska, a member of the Association of Roman Catholic Women Priests, to *Global Post*. "Not hearing the opinions of half of the world is like a slap in the face."

Some Catholics think women

should not be priests or the Pope because, they claim, the Bible shows that Jesus chose only men as his apostles. Instead, women can be nuns or perform other helping roles in the church. "Women do not need to be ordained priests in order to claim equality or to be of value and service to the Church," says Catholic writer Maria Rivera on Catholics United for the Faith.

But women from the Women's Ordination Conference and other advocacy groups disagree, saying



Pink Smoke set off by the Women's Ordination Conference hovers outside the Vatican in protest of the Catholic Church's ban on women priests.

that since they believe Jesus loves men and women equally, women should have equal opportunities for Church leadership.

Maybe official pink smoke will come out of the Vatican someday.

## indykids!

Phone: (212) 592-0116  
E-mail: info@indykids.org  
Website: www.indykids.org  
Mail: IndyKids  
P.O. Box 2281  
New York, NY 10163  
Published in print five times a year in September, November, January, March and May; Website updated once a month  
Issue #40 • Printed May 17, 2013  
ISSN: 1943-1031

### WHAT IS INDYKIDS?

IndyKids is a free newspaper, website and teaching tool that aims to inform children on current news and world events from a progressive perspective and to inspire in children a passion for social justice and learning. IndyKids is funded through donations and grants.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO...

The supporters and readers of *IndyKids*; New York Community Trust; Councilmember Daniel Dromi; New York City Cultural Affairs; Bay and Paul Foundation; Broadway United Church of Christ; Thompkins Library; DreamYard Project; Zach Wahls; Teaching for Change; Education Institute at Democracy Now!; Department of Youth and Community Development; New York Collective of Radical Educators;

### HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Just contact *IndyKids*! Adults and kids can write articles, take photos, contribute artwork and help distribute the paper.

### VOLUNTEERS

Design: Mike Newton

Staff and Board: Toi Sin Arvidsson, Jean Jaques Charles, Judi Cheng, Jyothi Natarajan, Kristin Oliver, Isis Phillips, Katie Schlechter

Core team: Amal Abass, Owen Davis, Malik Nickens, Dolly Oliver, Diana Raimondi, Nancy Ryerson, Bonnie Singer, Amanda Vender

Mentors: Alexis Jacobs, Patrice Johnson, Scott Luxor, Scott Sheu, Jon Tupas

Editors: Danny Leventhal, Katie Madges, Clarissa Pharr

IndyKids would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone involved in the organization during the past school year. The production of so many wonderful issues would not have been possible without your hard work and dedication to this project. Special thanks goes out to all of our dedicated volunteers, including mentors, editors, interns, our designer, our talented Kid Reporter Program team, our marvelous distribution team, and of course, all of our amazing Kid Reporters. We look forward to working with you again in the coming school year!



## Where in the World?

All the places listed below are mentioned in this issue. Can you match them with their general location on the world map at right? Answers are at the bottom of this page.

- Ireland \_\_\_\_
- Iraq \_\_\_\_
- Boston \_\_\_\_
- New York City \_\_\_\_
- Vatican City \_\_\_\_
- Kenya \_\_\_\_
- Brazil (Amazon region) \_\_\_\_



## Asthma: It Can Take Your Breath Away!

By SOLEDAD AGUILAR-COLON, age 11



**A**sthma is a lung disease that causes breathing difficulty. Scientists have proven that pollution is a major cause of asthma. Pollution can be any substance harmful to the environment, like a chemical or gas. Pollution from cars, power plants and factories can cause asthma attacks, according to a report by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC). The NRDC is an organization that uses scientific research to help governments create laws that protect the environment.

About 20 million people in the United States have had an asthma attack at least once in their life. However, the people at the biggest risk for developing asthma are children, according to pediatrician and asthma researcher David Peden. Kids are more likely to get asthma because they are exposed to a lot of outside air pollution, like from fuel exhaust (from the gas that cars and trucks use). They are more vulnerable because they are still growing and because they go outside more than adults to play. Also, among children, boys tend to have asthma more than girls.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC), the part of the US government that is responsible for doing



LONG BEACH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Children getting their breathing tested for asthma.

research on health, says that more Black and Latino children have asthma because many of them live in cities and in poorer areas that are closer to pollution from highways and factories and further away from parks and green open spaces.

Asthma attacks can lead to death. According to the CDC, they kill 5,000 people every year in the United States. If more and more people get asthma, then more people will die of asthma attacks. More of those people will be children.

## The Great Penny Debate



By ELEANOR HEDGES DUROY, age 10

**A**fter 211 years of making one cent coins, the United States Mint is debating eliminating the penny. It takes 1.79 cents for the U.S. Mint to make one penny, which is almost double the penny's worth! Pennies are part of U.S. heritage, and some people think it is important to keep them, but others feel that it is a waste of time and money to make them.

If the U.S. Mint melted down all of the pennies made before 1982 they would get 2.4 cents worth of copper from each penny! People who want to eliminate the penny say too much time is wasted handling pennies. As Greg Mankiw, an economist at Harvard University, said, "When people start leaving a monetary unit at the cash register for the next customer, the unit is too small to be useful." Some stores and restaurants even refuse to accept pennies.

Others are against eliminating pennies because prices may rise when rounded up to the nearest nickel. This would affect the poor more than other people, and would also affect charities that have "penny drives." Eliminating the penny would also make it



ANDREW DALLOS

100 Million pennies in Rockefeller Center.

necessary to produce more nickels. Since it costs more than 8 cents to make one nickel, the US would actually lose more money making more nickels than making pennies. Robert Whaples of Wake Forest University believes that people "want to keep a (U.S.) penny, regardless of all the good arguments against it." Because, as Whaples says, "It's a sentimental attachment." What do you think? Should the United States keep the penny?

## newsbriefs



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

### 10-Year Anniversary of the Iraq War



By DANIEL IVKO, age 12

March 2013 marks 10 years of America's war in Iraq. Beginning in 2003, American troops were sent to Iraq by President Bush to stop Saddam Hussein from building weapons of mass destruction and to establish a democratic government. Since the beginning of the war, 4,488 American soldiers have died and 32,000 were wounded. On the Iraqi side, 190,000 soldiers and civilians were killed and almost two million refugees left.



FRITZ LIESS

### The Supreme Court Discusses Marriage Equality



By LILY COOK, age 15

On March 26, 2013, the Supreme Court heard arguments about the current laws that deny same-sex couples the right to marry. Those in favor of marriage equality argue that marriage is a constitutional right for everyone. Those opposing this argue that marriage should only be between a man and a woman. Although the jury is still contemplating their decision, 70 percent of Americans under the age of 33 are in favor of marriage equality.

### Boston Marathon Bombing



ANUBIS ABYSS

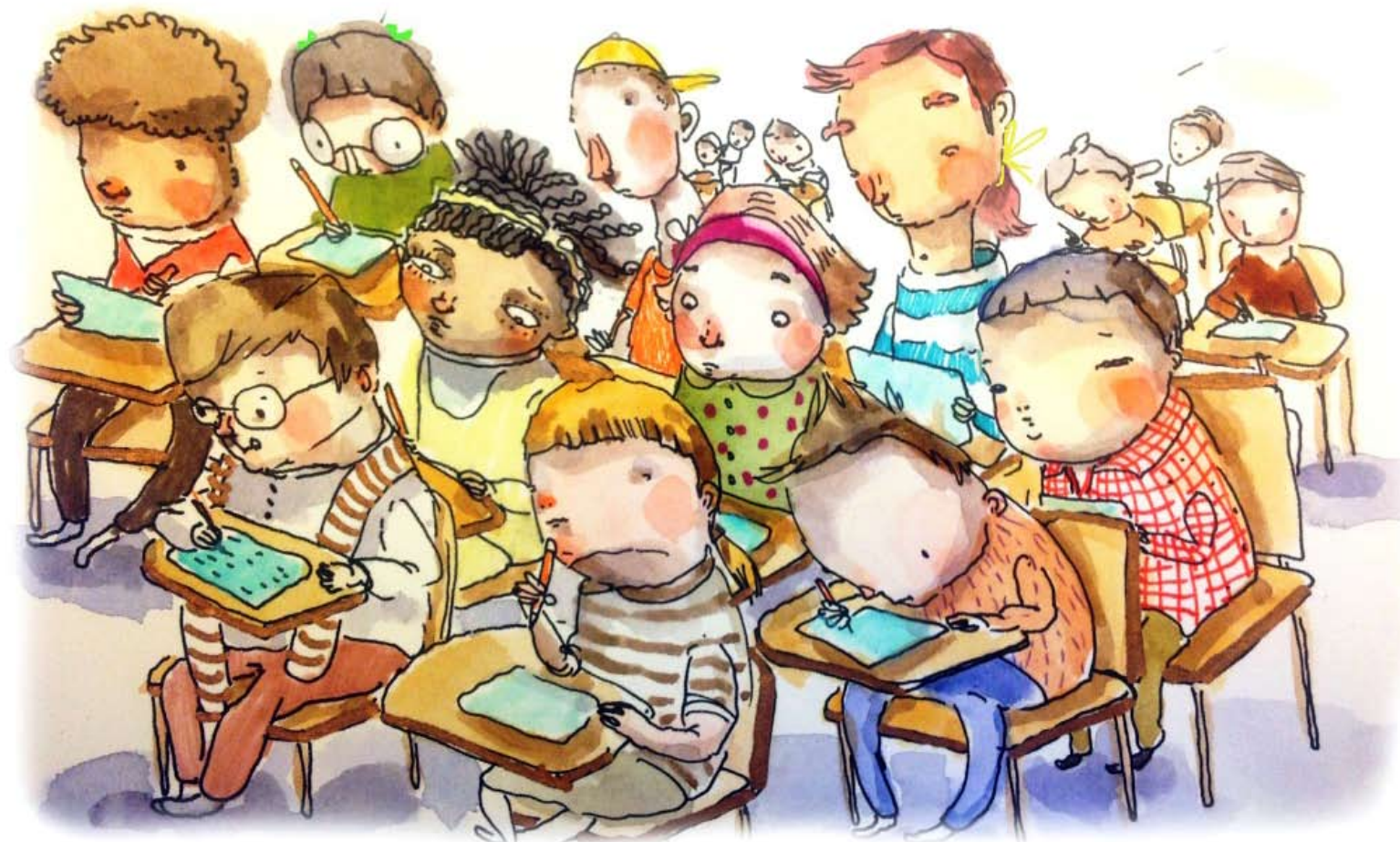
By ELIYA AHMAD, age 11

On March 15, two bombs were set off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, in a section of the race specifically dedicated to the victims of the Sandy Hook shooting. Made with ordinary household objects, the bombs killed three people and injured over 170. One of the accused was shot and killed in a shootout with police, while the other was later caught and hospitalized for his injuries.



# THE RISE OF HIGH STAKES STANDARDIZED TESTING

By THEO FRYE YANOS, age 10



Illustrations by IVETTE SALOM

**In April each year,** one phrase floats around in all the classrooms that almost every student fears: standardized tests. But where did these standardized tests come from, and how did they become what they are now?

In 2001, the United States federal government passed the No Child Left Behind Act, providing states with money for schools and school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income communities under the condition that they set academic standards and give students assessments in order to track their achievement. Eventually, states started using these tests for promoting students to the next grade. Thus, kids who got a low score on these tests would often not be permitted to advance to the next grade or graduate. Likewise, schools that kept failing to meet state and national standards with their students' scores risked losing funding and sometimes even shutting down. Such consequences of scoring poorly led to these tests being described as "high-stakes."

These were the first modern high-stakes standardized tests. The assessments test students' English literacy, math and science skills. In New York State, the standardized tests for grades three to eight consist of three days of math testing and three days of English literacy testing, as well as an added day of science testing for fourth and eighth grade. Each day of testing takes from 70 to 90 minutes, differing by grade. The tests are generally made up of multiple choice, short answer and essay questions.

Supporters of this style of testing claim that it is the best way to track nationwide student progress and keep the same educational standards across the country. However, one of the criticisms of current standardized testing is that because they are high-stakes, they create a lot of stress for the students taking them. This may create invalid results if the student performs worse on the test under stress.

While the debate around high-stakes standardized testing heats up, their effects are being felt by students and teachers as well as their schools and communities across the nation.

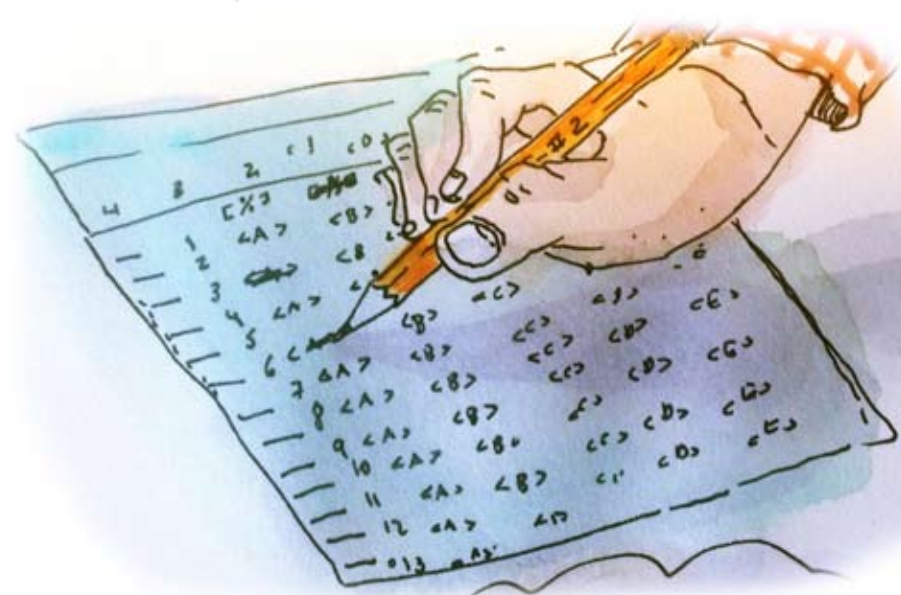
## The Effects High-Stakes Standardized Testing on Schools and Communities

By MOKGWESI  
SIZWE CHAPMAN, age 14



Besides assessing students, in many districts, testing is used to indicate how the school is doing based on the overall students' test scores. Schools that are performing poorly on the state tests are put in difficult circumstances. Many schools are shutting down from loss of funding due to low scores. As a result, some schools have started teaching to the test, which can minimize or eliminate curricula that are not on the test.

Teachers and parents have started boycotting standardized testing for how it forces teachers to teach to the test. Communities are starting to get more involved and some students have started to protest as well. In Chicago, over one hundred students rallied to stop the closing of over fifty schools and demand fewer standardized tests. In response to this growing pressure on schools to raise scores or shut down, Reverend Jesse Jackson Sr. commented, "A school cannot thrive as an oasis in a social desert... Schools cannot bear the blame for all the maladies of poverty, unemployment, danger and pain."



## The Effects of High-Stakes Standardized Testing on Teachers

By ROBERT IVKO, age 13



Standardized testing has affected not only students, but teachers as well. With such a high-stakes test, teachers have a lot of pressure on their shoulders for their classes to score well.



This has led to cheating scandals that have increased student's scores, but lowered the reputation of standardized testing. Recently in Atlanta, thirty-five school employees were charged with tampering with the scores of children. However, after this scandal, parents still fear if their children are doing well on their tests.

There are educators who favor the current system of standardized testing. Some teachers claim that because of standardized testing, students' scores in school work improve. Education researcher Richard P. Phelps defends the practice of planning lessons around upcoming tests: "If curricula are carefully developed by educators and the test is written with curricula in mind, then teaching to the test means teaching students the knowledge and skills we agree they ought to learn—exactly what our teachers are legally and ethically obligated to do."

On the other side, Sandy Kress, a former advisor to President Bush, said, "Focusing too much on test scores alone will, in the end, cheat students out of the kind of quality education that sometimes can't be measured by standardized tests." Most

of the teachers who have recently boycotted these tests agree with Sandy Kress and are stuck explaining to students that standardized testing is not the most important part of their education.

### Glossary of terms

**curricula:** plural term for curriculum, which refers to the subjects taught during a course of study in school

**high-stakes:** something that has serious consequences for the person or group participating in the activity. High-stakes standardized tests have serious consequences for students who do not score well as they may be prevented from moving to the next grade level or graduating. The stakes are also high for schools that might lose funding if their students score poorly.

**socioeconomic:** the combination of social and economic factors in a person's life

## The Effects of High-Stakes Standardized Testing on Students

By YUUKI REAL, age 13



Supporters of standardized tests argue that the tests have proven to predict the future performance of students fairly accurately. They also point out that standardized tests can qualify high achievers for college scholarships.

Critics say that tests do not always coincide (match up) with the curriculum taught, resulting in students being unprepared in certain exam sections. Others are concerned that the emphasis placed on test scores lessens the attention on other educational subjects.

Research has demonstrated a continual achievement gap among students from certain ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. Concerns have been raised that tests are written unfairly, resulting in lower scores for some populations. Families with fewer resources cannot invest as much money and time to prepare their children for the testing as wealthier families can, thereby widening this gap.

No matter the argument, many students react negatively to the immense pressure to do well. Because of stress, results do not always accurately reflect a student's true learning potential. A fourth and a seventh grader from Ithaca, NY were interviewed and both agreed on one thing: they didn't feel as though standardized testing contributed to their overall education, nor did they feel it fully evaluated their understanding of the topic.

The fourth grade boy commented that "it doesn't really feel necessary, and it just gets me stressed out."







WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

## Scientists Clone an Extinct Animal



By IRATI EGORHO DIEZ, age 10

For the past two decades scientists have seen de-extinction as a cross between reality and fantasy. Finally, on July 30, 2009, a team of French and Spanish scientists brought back a cloned Bucardo, or Pyrenean ibex, a wild goat that became extinct in 2000. Unfortunately, the clone only survived for 7 minutes. Scientists all around the world still question whether it is even worth it to try bringing extinct animals back if we are destroying the habitats they live in.

## Return of the Astronaut and Cosmonauts



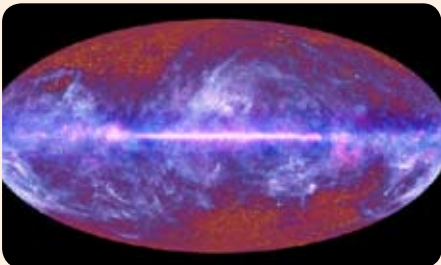
NASA

By ANA PHELAN, age 9



On Saturday, March 16, three astronauts returned to Earth from space. Astronaut Kevin Ford from the United States and cosmonauts Evgeny Tarelkin and Oleg Novitskiy from Russia were up in space for 144 days. While orbiting (moving in a curved path) around the Earth, the astronauts were experimenting with the way objects are affected by gravity.

## The Universe is 80 Million Years Older Than We Thought



ESA/LFI AND HFI CONSORTIA

By SUNDAR THOMAS, age 9

In March 2013, the Planck satellite took a picture of light and sound in space and scientists at the European Space Agency discovered that the universe is 80-100 million years older than originally thought. It is now thought to be about 13.8 billion years old. Scientists disagree about how important the extra millions of years will be to future theories of the universe and its creation.

17,000

In 2011, 17,000 elephants were killed in Africa for their tusks. Poachers ship most of the ivory to illegal markets in Asia.

# culture&activism

## Elephant Poaching on the Rise in Africa

By TANYA PORCARI, age 10



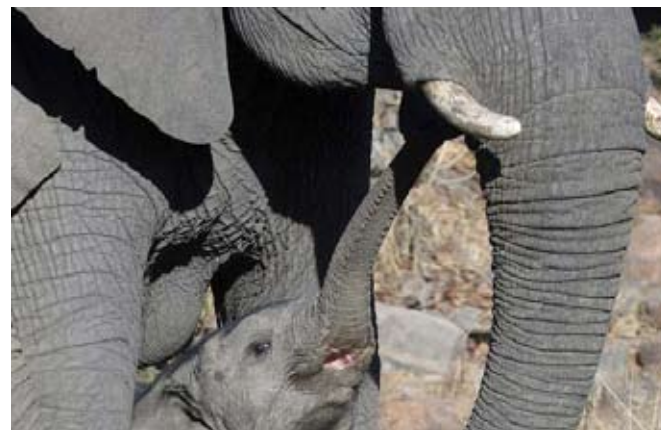
The World Wildlife Fund recently reported that poachers killed 89 elephants in one night near the town of Ganba, Chad. It is not the first time it has happened and it is likely to happen again if poachers are not stopped.

In 2011 alone, approximately 17,000 elephants were killed in Africa for their ivory tusks. Poachers ship ivory to Asia and other markets where they are sold illegally.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species identified Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, along with top ivory buyers, China and Thailand, as making insufficient efforts to stop the trade. If more governments chose to take action, this could become a felony and the elephant poachers could be put in jail.

The United Nations Environment Programme, an organization that focuses on wildlife, states that to help save elephants' lives, we must "reduce market demand for illegal ivory by conducting targeted and effective awareness-raising campaigns about the devastating impacts of the illegal trade in ivory."

Stephanie Vergnault, founder of SOS Elephants, an organization working in Chad to put a stop to the elephant poaching, agrees. "The international community should pressure all the states buying [ivory] to condemn it," says Vergnault.



SABI SABI

An elephant calf and its mother.

Elephants help maintain forest and savanna ecosystems.\* If African elephants become extinct from poaching, it could hurt communities and wildlife in their native habitats, while the corpses abandoned by poachers can spread disease and contaminate water sources for villages.

"Saving wildlife is the responsibility of all thinking people," says Dr. Sheldrick of The David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, an organization that rescues baby elephants when their families are killed. After the orphaned elephants reach maturity, they are released back into the wild.

\*The African savanna ecosystem is a tropical grassland with warm temperatures year-round and with its highest seasonal rainfall in the summer. (National Geographic Education)

## Anti-Street Harassment Demonstration in New York City

By NYLU AVERY BERNSTAYN, age 8

On April 13, 2013, people gathered in Washington Square Park in New York City for International Anti-Street Harassment Week (April 7-13). Stop Street Harassment is a non-profit organization working to end gender-based street harassment throughout the world. They define street harassment as "unwelcome words and actions by unknown persons in public which are motivated by gender and invade a person's physical and emotional space in a disrespectful, creepy, startling, scary or insulting way."

According to an online survey of 811 women that was conducted by Stop Street Harassment in 2008, more than 99 percent of respondents had experienced some form of harassment (such as verbal comments, honking, whistling, kissing noises, leering/staring, touching, stalking, attempted or achieved assault, etc) in a public place.

Organizations such as Hollaback!, Girls for Gender Equity, The Feminist Society at New York University, the Center for Anti-Violence Education and RightRides sponsored the rally in an effort to stop street harassment and end violence against women and LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning) individuals.

The rally, which included speakers and performers, was followed by a chalk walk where participants wrote messages about street harassment on the streets of New York City. Slogans such as, "My name is NOT 'Hey Baby,'" "Nothing I'm wearing gives you the right to say that" and "You can compliment me by respecting me" were written with colorful chalk



LISA RAMIREZ

Kid Reporter Nyly writes messages in chalk at the Anti-Street Harassment Rally in Washington Square Park on April 13, 2013.

on sidewalks and streets to raise awareness about the issue of street harassment.

For more information, you can visit Stop Street Harassment's website at [www.stopstreetharassment.org](http://www.stopstreetharassment.org).



## Do you think the Boy Scouts of America's ban on gay scouts and leaders is fair?



By ZOLA ROSS-GRAY, age 11



No. The Boy Scouts are supposed to represent individuality and self-confidence. If a scout is gay then that's who he is. Gay men already have the right to marry [in some states], which is similar, and they should be presenting themselves as who they are. The BSA should not condemn that.

Lucca Palumbo, age 12



There is no apparent reason for this ban to be active. The ban won't change who somebody is. If my foot was cut off in an accident and I was banned from being an accountant as a result, it wouldn't make any sense. I feel the same way about this.

Baker Kolvenbach, age 10



No, this ban is not fair. It's the 21st century, and parents are teaching their kids that it is a good thing to be different. The BSA is choosing to protect its boy scouts from their openly gay peers. This is not healthy because the world is a big place and these scouts will need to experience and respect people for who they are.

Azalea Danes, age 10



No, this ban is unfair. Boy Scouts are people too. Boy Scouts should let all boys into the troops no matter their sexual orientation. The BSA should use the Girl Scouts as an example for how they should be—since the Girl Scouts are the exact opposite of the BSA in their ideas about LGBT scouts and leaders.

Edith Liben, age 10

## Someday, you could be a Lead Trainer, just like Jenny Deida



By ALEXIA ALMONTE, age 13

Have you ever thought about what it would be like to have a job helping others work out and stay healthy? Jenny Deida is a lead trainer and development director at Revolutionary Fitness in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in New York City. She helps people in her community exercise, eat nutritiously and live healthier lives.

**Alexia Almonte: How was the organization founded?**

**Jenny Deida:** A few years ago it was founded when two friends were working out and they figured out that the community needed [an organization like this] because there weren't many things to help bring awareness to [health] issues. There was also a lack of funding for health services and fitness awareness.

**Why do you think that this neighborhood (the Lower East Side) needs this fitness program?**

Many people of color in the Lower East Side have limited access to healthy foods or advice about their health. Revolutionary Fitness helps provide that. Our services are donation based or free. Revolutionary Fitness gives to families and helps to show how they can help each other. [Our organization] tries to help them make better decisions about what they eat. It's

true that healthy foods are more expensive but that's one big problem that Revolutionary Fitness is trying to help overcome.

**How do you think this neighborhood can cause certain issues in a person's health?**

Some kids with weak immune systems get asthma, and other diseases. The Con Edison (ConEd) plant can [contribute to] this sickness. This can be prevented by using greener approaches to providing electricity. Some oils that people use to generate power can also be toxic. They should use renewable energy systems, but only some can afford this. ConEd has the monopoly in the city, so people don't have a lot of choices.

**Do you have any advice for people who want to be healthier?**

You can reduce the risks of getting diseases by eating well and working out. You can join a gym, eat more fruits and vegetables, drink more water and fewer juices and sodas. You can use more body movements like walking. You can access our website and try to get in contact with us; we can help you break some habits that are bad for your health. Revolutionary fitness can be reached at [www.revfitnyc.org](http://www.revfitnyc.org).



JUDI CHENG

## letters

These are comments that readers have left on articles at [indykids.org](http://indykids.org). You can leave your own comments on any of the articles on our site.

In response to "Kids Take Part in Egypt's Revolution" by Amanda Vender, I think that it is very important that all these children care about the people around them and their country. It's outstanding that they know good from evil, want a better future, and that they begin to start learning about their government when they're young, so they can change and improve it when they get older. It just amazes me that these children have the courage to speak their minds and do what they think is right. All of these kids... will go far in life. Standing up to a government like that is tough when you don't know what they will do to you.

Ivy V.

From this article, "Women's Rights Today," by Eleanor Hedges Duroy, I realized that women in Asia and Africa work very hard to achieve their dreams. For instance, look at Areej El Madhoun, she is only 14 and she is trying to make a



difference for women... Like in South Korea and Afghanistan, they are making a difference. So, what I have learned, overall on this issue, is that women are very important to any culture in the world. They should deserve some respect from others as family, friends, neighbors, even presidents. Women need to make a stand and say we are people too. Women have rights.

Brenda Vazquez

In response to the article, "Kids Celebrate May Day," in my point of view the United States should have the same rights as other countries if they want to celebrate May Day.

May Day should be celebrated in the United States because the US is a state of freedom and what people do all over the world may impact the US as well.

Yamilet

In response to the article, "Kids Celebrate May Day," May Day should be important in United States like other countries around the world. People should get the freedom they need and have a day off.

Kevin Juncal



## WRITE TO INDYKIDS!

Send an email to: [info@indykids.org](mailto:info@indykids.org), comment online at [www.indykids.org](http://www.indykids.org), or write to: *IndyKids*, P.O. Box 2281, New York NY 10163

## Donate!



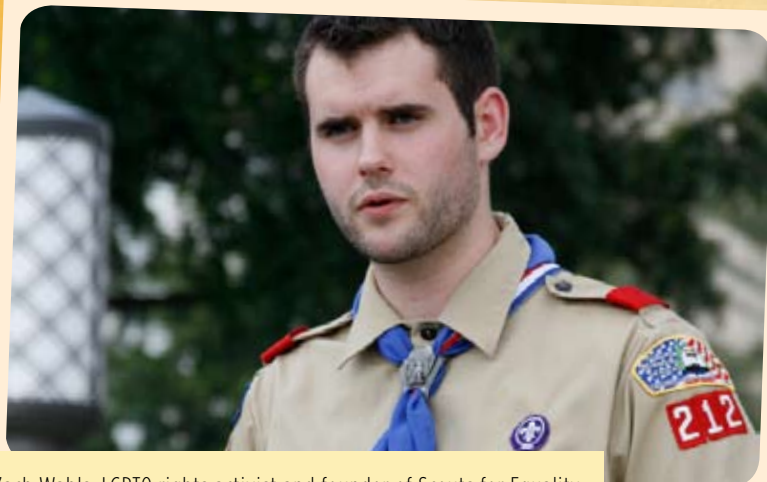
*IndyKids* inspires a passion for social justice and learning in kids to help form the next generation of critical thinkers, journalists, community leaders and activists. *IndyKids* does not accept advertising income or corporate sponsorship—instead we rely on dedicated supporters and readers like you.

Your donation will make it possible for *IndyKids* to continue to publish our free, nationally distributed newspaper and to develop the next generation of young journalists trained in our Kid Reporter Program. Every donation makes a difference!

Mail your tax-deductible donation to:

*IndyKids*, P.O. Box 2281, New York, NY 10163.  
or donate online at [www.IndyKids.org](http://www.IndyKids.org)





Zach Wahls, LGBTQ rights activist and founder of Scouts for Equality, delivers petitions to the Boy Scouts of America.

CHRISTINE IRVINE

## MEET ZACH WAHLS, FOUNDER OF SCOUTS FOR EQUALITY



By ZOLA ROSS-GRAY, age 11

Zach Wahls is the founder of Scouts for Equality, an organization that has been fighting since June 2012 to end the Boy Scouts of America's ban on gay scouts and leaders. As a proud Eagle Scout and son of two loving moms, Zach is passionate about getting the word out about this important issue.

**Zola Ross-Gray:** Is there anyone else you know who feels as strongly as you do about the BSA ban?

**Zach Wahls:** There are people all over the country who care about this issue even more strongly than I do. It's my job as the leader of the campaign to make sure that those people are supported by my organization and are able to do the work needed to end the ban on gay youth and parents.

**ZRG:** How many scouts and leaders do you think are impacted by the ban?

**ZW:** Regardless of whether or not a Scout is gay or straight, the ban has a huge effect on every single Scout. Teaching Scouts that discrimination is okay, and that's what the ban does, sends a harmful message to all youth, gay and straight, and has no place in Scouting.

**ZRG:** How do your mothers feel about your activism?

**ZW:** My mothers are both proud of the work that my team and I are doing and are glad to know that if we're successful, families like ours, with two moms or two dads, won't have to worry about this ban any more. And that's something that's long overdue.

**ZRG:** What can kids do to help support this cause?

**ZW:** If you support LGBT rights, there has never been a better time to join the Scouting program. In order to end the ban on gay members, we have to show the Boy Scouts that there are millions of Americans ready to support them the moment they end their ban on gay youth and parents. I think that knowing there are young people who want to be Scouts but don't want to exclude their gay friends and neighbors sends a powerful message to Scouting leadership.

## CARTOON

By ANA PHELAN, age 9



MARIE HALE

## GETTING WILD WITH THE CAPYBARA

Capybaras are the world's largest rodent, followed by the beaver and the porcupine, and are close relatives of chinchillas and guinea pigs. They are found throughout South America, mostly in savannas and dense forests in the Amazon. Capybaras are "semi-aquatic" and have webbed feet, love to swim and always live near water sources like lakes, rivers, swamps, ponds and marshes.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Their name comes from the Tupi word ka'apiũara. The Tupi are a native people from coastal Brazil. They chose this name because it means "grass-eater." It makes sense, because capybaras are herbivores.

## WORD SCRAMBLE!



By ELIYA AHMAD, age 11

Unscramble the letters to find key words from the articles in this issue of *IndyKids!*

acttisnuntloio gitrrsh \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 2)

hcitcaol uhhccr \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 2)

oyb ctsous \_\_\_\_\_ (pp. 1 & 8)

sastonuomc \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 6)

anavcit \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 2)

znidasetdrad \_\_\_\_\_ (pp. 4-5)

tsset \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 4-5)

lutloipon \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 3)

mshranstea \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 6)

htanelesp \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 6)

xnitect \_\_\_\_\_ (pg. 6)

Answers on page 2

- Highly social animals, capybaras usually live in groups of 10-20, but are sometimes found in groups of over 100.
- Capybaras can stay under water for up to five minutes.
- The illustrated children's book *The Wump World* by Bill Peet tells the story of a small planet entirely populated by imaginary creatures, called "wumps," that are based on the capybara. In the book, the wumps' beautiful planet is invaded by human-like creatures called "Pollutions" that move from planet to planet, building cities and polluting along the way. If you want to know the ending, check out the book from your local library.